

***Ad hoc* Group on Earth Observations (GEO)  
Subgroup on Data Utilization**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Recalling the GEO Terms of Reference adopted on 1 August 2003 at GEO-1, the GEO establishes a Subgroup on Data Utilization and sets forth the following legally non-binding Terms of Reference:

**1. Purpose**

The Subgroup on Data Utilization will seek to develop a long-term data utilization strategy for the 10-year implementation plan for a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained Earth observation system or systems, including *in situ*, airborne, and space-borne observations, taking into account existing activities, and building on existing systems and initiatives.

**2. Objectives**

- 2.1. Review and document relevant international Earth observation data policies.
- 2.2. Identify possible barriers to data accessibility and utility and develop strategies to minimize them.
- 2.3. Encourage the development and use of common data standards and formats and consistent calibration methodologies to facilitate broader data access and use, and to enhance data preservation, where appropriate.
- 2.4. Address data utilization challenges and requirements, such as complexities of various data and metadata sources, quality control, archives, and data management systems.
- 2.5. Develop a data utilization model for the 10-year implementation plan.

**3. Approach and Functions**

- 3.1. Identify and evaluate existing data utilization approaches for suitability and viability for use under the 10-year plan, including such matters as:
  - a. Capture of metadata;
  - b. Instrument and data calibration;
  - c. Format and exchange standards for data and metadata;
  - d. Catalogues and directories, including interoperability;
  - e. Data and metadata availability, including cost and timeliness;
  - f. Data policies and complexities of diverse data sources.
- 3.2. Evaluate alternatives with respect to meeting desired outcomes and required functions, including resource implications.

- 3.3. Identify and prioritize actions required to implement the long-term strategy.
- 3.4. Recommend a long-term data utilization strategy for the 10-year implementation plan.

#### **4. Subgroup Organization and Reporting**

- 4.1. The Subgroup welcomes and is open to all interested GEO Members and participant organizations. The GEO Secretariat will maintain the list of current Subgroup Members and participants.
- 4.2. Representatives of Members and participant organizations may chair or co-chair this Subgroup. The Subgroup chairs or co-chairs will be nominated to and approved by the GEO; additional co-chairs may be designated by consensus of Subgroup Members.
- 4.3. Additional technical experts may participate in Subgroup deliberations at the invitation of a GEO Member or participant organization.
- 4.4. The Subgroup will meet at such times and places as determined by its Members.
- 4.5. The Subgroup will work by consensus of its Members.
- 4.6. The co-chairs of this Subgroup will report progress to the GEO Secretariat at appropriate intervals, and deliver progress reports at each GEO meeting.
- 4.7. The Sub-group may set up Task teams to address particular issues under its mandate.
- 4.8. The co-chairs of this Subgroup are encouraged to share documents, collaborate, and coordinate with other Subgroups.

#### **5. Funding**

Unless otherwise agreed, any costs arising from activities under these Terms of Reference will be borne by the Member or participant that incurs them, and will be subject to the availability of funds, personnel, and other resources.

#### **6. Duration**

- 6.1. All activities under these Terms of Reference will commence upon adoption and will continue for the duration and life of the ad hoc Group on Earth Observations, unless otherwise terminated.
- 6.2. The terms of this document may be modified at any time by written agreement of the GEO Members.

**Data Utilization Subgroup Members and Participants**

*As of 1 October 2003*

Brazil\*  
Canada \*  
European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (ECMWF)\*  
United States \*  
Argentina  
Australia  
Belgium  
Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS)  
China  
European Commission  
European Space Agency (ESA)  
Egypt  
France  
Germany  
Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)  
Greece  
Integrated Global Observing Strategy Partnership (IGOS-P)  
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission/Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan  
Norway  
Netherlands  
Russian Federation  
South Africa  
Spain  
Sweden  
Thailand  
United Kingdom  
World Climate Research Programme (WCRP)  
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

*indicates Co-Chair*